THE EMBROIDERED TEXTILES OF THE TODA TRIBES OF THE NILGIRIS

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Dr. T.S. Sridhar, I.A.S.,
Principal Secretary Commissioner of Museums,
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FOREWORD

The topic of 'Tribal Arts & Crafts' is a fascinating domain for people in all walks of life. The Toda tribal women of the Nilgiris are observed to practise an indigenous embroidery over handwoven unbleeched cotton cloth and the resultant embroidered shawl is referred to as 'putkuli' in their native language.

In accordance to modernity, the Todas replicate the traditional motifs of their embroidered putkuli in extended forms such as petticoats, half coats, shoulder bags, kerchiefs, sofa covers, purses and thereby able to generate additional income by selling them to the tourists.

Dr. C. Maheswaran, Curator for Anthropology of the Government Museum, Chennai had undertaken a micro-level study of the embroidered textiles of the Todas and the outcome of that study is presented by him as a monograph.

We are indeed very happy to publish this monograph entitled, "The Embroidered Textiles of the Todas of the Nilgiris" as one of the Museum Publications. I wish to congratulate the author of this monograph for his painstaking efforts in bringing out this volume in time.

I hope that this monograph will be a welcome addition among the scholars, students and general public who are interested in the study of tribal arts & crafts, in general and that of the tribal arts & crafts of the Nilgiris, in particular.

T.S. Sridhar
3/6/10
(T.S. Sridhar)

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PREFACE

The Todas of the Nilgiris are one of the most widely studied tribal groups both in India and abroad. However, certain intangible cultural behaviours and tangible objects of culture of the Toda tribes still need fresh lights. Realizing this fact, a micro-level study of the 'Toda Putkuli' (which plays a pivotal and crucial role both in the rites of passage and religious observances), was taken up by me during 2009-2010. The outcome of the research work is brought out as a monograph entitled, "The Embroidered Textiles of tha Todas of the Nilgiris".

Dr. T.S. Sridhar, I.A.S., our beloved Principal Secretary/Commissioner of Museums, Government of Tamilnadu was kind enough to include this monograph as one of the Museum Publications in 2010. I am profusely thankful to him for this generous gasture which kindlas and inapires my research ventures further.

I hope that this work will also be received very well by the scholarly world, as in the case of our earlier publications.

(C. Maheswaran)

Dedicated

to

The fond remembrance of
Dr. S. Sakthivel

my beloved friend, guide & philosopher
who has initiated me to Anthropology

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.0 General

The Toda tribe is one of the few tribal groups in the world studied widely by the people of all walks of life. The culture of the Toda people is noted for its many aspects such as unique physical traits (of high stature, fair complexion, sharp nose), tangible cultural objects (of embroidered mantle, half-barrel shaped dwelling hut, conical temple) and intangible cultural practices (of buffalo herding, pregnancy - binding rites, *putkuli* wearing).

1.1 Studying Tangibility and Intangibility of the Embroidered Textiles of the Todas

A few years ago only the tangible aspects of the Toda's culture were given importance, showcasing the cultural heritage of the ethnic group. This material aspect reflects only a part of the cultural values of Toda community, thereby recently emphasis is made on depicting the non-material cultural details of the community as well[1] - with the genuine aim of projecting the whole culture complex. In other words, it was realized that the study of intangible cultural heritage along with the study of tangible cultural heritage could alone portray the holistic picture of a cultural heritage.

In this monograph, with the objective of portraying the holistic cultural heritage, the embroidered textiles, the colourful craftefact[2] of the Todas was studied, both from the object of tangible and intangible cultural aspects. Such a micro-level study of the embroidered textiles of the Toda tribes is a pioneer attempt, in the history of study of tribal arts and crafts of Tamil Nadu, in general and tribal arts and crafts of the Nilgiris, in particular.

1.2 Scope of the Present Study

The present study deals with merging together the tangibility and the intangibility of the embroidered textiles of the Toda tribes of the Nilgiris.

1.3 Research Methodology employed in the Present Study

In this present study, *putkuli*, the typical embroidered textile of the Toda tribes of the Nilgiris was studied in the original cultural contexts, so as to unravel the intangibility of the tangible craftefact, by undertaking study tours to the various Toda hamlets.

Further, in this study, the data elicited about the *putkuli* and allied embroidered textiles from the above study tours were later recorded appropriately with photographic

documentation. Apart from sucb primary sources, tbe earlier works of W.E. Marshall (1873), J.W. Breeks (1873), W.H.R. Rivers (1906), W. Francis (1908), E. Thurston (1909), M.B Emeneau (1937), T.Chhabra (2000), J. Parthasarathy (2005) T.Chhabra (2008), were referred as well for cross-reference and additional data, if any in this present study.

1.4 Significance of the Present Study

As *putkuli* and allied embroidered textiles of the Todas are taken up for a micro-level study and approached in such a way, that their tangibility and intangibility are dealt simultaneously in detail, in this present study.

In contray to the claim of the Badugas[3], a neighbouring non-tribal community of the Todas, that the craft of embroidering the *putkuli* and other allied textiles was not introduced by Ms. Catherine F.Ling but in vogue among the Todas as an indigenous knowledge system, is established in this present study-with empirical data and cultural evidences.

1.5 Limitations of the Present Study

The scope of the present study is with the following limitations:-

(i) Although it is found that the counting of yarns while embroidering the *putkuli* and other allied textiles determines the outcome of a particular motif and thereby the ultimate design, the underlying different formulae could not be recorded and documented by the present investigator, as the Toda tribes are not competent to precisly explain this line of inquiry.

(ii) Tbe various motifs incorporated in the designs of the *putkuli* and other allied embroidered textiles could not be photo-documented due to unavoidable circumstances.[4]

II. *PUTKULI*, THE TYPICAL EMBROIDERED TEXTILE OF THE TODAS: AN OVERVIEW

2.0 General

The embroidered textile of the Todas which is used as a mantle/shawl/cloak/toga is designated as *putkuli* in the Toda native language. *Putkuli* the embroidered textile of the Toda tribes of the Nilgiris reveal a highly developed aesthetic sense. A typical *putkuli* is made of unbleached handwoven white cotton cloth, consisting of two pieces of material stitched back to back and embroidered in black and red. And its two ends are decorated elaborately. The patterns of the *putkuli* are executed by the combined methods of darning and embroidery.

In other words, the design of *putkuli* is laid out in between the strips of black and red which are embroidered in the cloth at the two ends - one end being more elaborate than the other. As the embroidery is woven out in intricate manner by means of darning and counting the threads and or the gap of threads, the resultant design emanates as geometric forms, at a casual glance. When embroidery is done along a strip (and not across it), naturalistic designs appear as geometric patterns - on the reverse of the shawl as well.

Thus, the Toda *putkuli*, the embroidered textile is striking in its bold colour scheme and complex combination of weaving and embroidery.

2.1 *Putkuli* as the Traditional Garment of the Toda People of all Walks of Life

The *putkuli* is worn among the Toda people of all age group, viz , men, women, girls, boys. During ritual observances such as consecration of toda temples, rites of passage such as pre-puberty marriage, pregnancy-binding rites the *putkuli* is worn by the Toda children as well. Todas wear the *putkuli* in such a way that it covers their chest, right arm and shoulders, leaving the left arm free.

The best and the most elaborately worked out specimens (of *putkuli*) are used by important persons of the Toda tribes at festive gatherings and funerals. And the elderly Toda people are observed, preserving intricately designed shawl to be draped over their bodies when they are dead. Generally, *putkuli* with the snake motif is used as a shroud.

"Now every one has a *putkuli*, but formerly there was only one (*putkuli*) for the whole family" revealed an aged Toda in the interview given to Colonel W.E. Marsball (as quoted in Thurston, E.1909.144).

The Todas apply rancid butter to their *putkuli* as a preservative reagent (as in the case of applying butter to their other tribal creativities such as ladle, *bugiri*).

2.2 *Putkuli* as a Garment of Double Thickness

The *putkuli* which is made of coarse unbleached white handloom cloth of approximately 76.3x259.3 cm consists of two lengths (each length consisting of two pieces joined longitudinally) of cloth sewn together at the edges to form a garment of double thickness.

The fibre, obtained from Nilgiri nettle (*Girardinia heterophylla*) is used to stitch the *putkuli* with steel needle.[5]

2.3 Embroidering of *Putkuli* - An Indigenous Handicraft of the Toda womenfolk

The Toda women, in their leisure time, engage themselves in embroidering the coarse unbleached handwoven white cotton cloth with *pukaor*("motif") and convert it into *putkuli* by employing prominently the woolen threads of black colour and red colour known as *kaag*.[6] Young Toda girls observe the embroidery works of the elders of their respective *mod*("mand") (like grandmothers, mother, mother's sisters, elder sisters, sisters-in-law) and imbibe the indigenous craft by participation(i.e., through participant-observation), in due course.

The only tool they utilize is an ordinary sewing needle of steel and the technique they employed is that of darning and counting of threads (and thereby locating the yarn gap) of the woven material to form the desired design. The unbleached nature of the hand-woven white cloth helps in identifying the yarn gap, quite easily.

And the raw materials used are the woolen threads in black, red (and rarely blue, green) hue.

The neighbouring Baduga people claim that the embroidery was introduced among the Toda tribes only by Ms.Catherine F. Ling of the Church of England Zenana Mission Society. The fact that the work of Colonel Marshall (1873-49) contains a description of *putkuli*, bearing embroidery, along with a photographic documentation of a Toda man clad in *putkuli* bearing embroidered designs in it reveals us that the Toda tribes observed the practice of embroidering their *putkuli* even before the arrival of Ms.C.F.Ling to the Toda land (in 1890).

However, we may presume that Ms. C.F.Ling might have encouraged the Toda womenfolk to incorporate elaborate designs in their embroidery[7] so as to craft the craftefact, as a more attractive one and thereby as a source of fetching relatively of better profitable income while selling the *putkuli* through the Mission

The counting of yarn gaps and finalizing the motif by the Toda women could also reiterate that the Toda form of embroidery is an indigenous creative art expression of the Todas themselves and not imbibed by outsiders

2.4 Wearing the *putkuli* as a Tribal Identity of the Todas

The Todas are distinguished from other ethnic groups of the Nilgiris by wearing of their traditional costume of embroidered shawl, the *putkuli*.[8] It is made of a thick unbleached handwoven white cotton cloth, having one or two stripes in red, blue or black. This traditional dress resembling the Roman toga is worn by both men and women, over a waist cloth.

III. OBSERVATIONS OF FOREIGN SCHOLARS ON *PUTKULI*

3.0 General

The foreign scholars who observed *putkuli* while at their meetings with the Toda tribes recorded their observations. Some of the noteworthy observations of certain foreign scholars are enlisted below for a better understanding of the Toda embroidery and the embroidered textiles of the Todas.

3.1 Observations of Colonel W.E.Marshall

The author of the monumental work on the Todas, "A Phrenologist among the Todas" Colonel W.E Marshall records his observations on Toda *Putkuli* as given below (1873-49):

"The Toda *Putkuli* which measures about 6 foot long by 4 foot broad is made of coarse unbleached cotton and worn as double, ornamented at two ends with red and blue stripes, and sometimes with a little embroidery in blue.....This mantle is sufficiently large to envelope a woman completely decent though cumbersome garment to be suited for sitting and sleeping in than for any purpose of labour. Pockets are made in the corners of the mantle stitching the double clothe together at those places.[9]

3.2 Observations of Administrator W.Francis

W.Francis who compiled the District Gazatteer of the Nilgiris (1908-140) observes on the *putkuli* of the Todas as follows:

".....both men and women wear an upper mantle of double cloth called the *putkuli* with red and blue embroidered borders .....which is worn round the shoulders between the folders of the double *putkuli* is a capacious pocket".

3.3 Observations of Ethnographer E.Tbarston

Edgar Thurston, the author of the monumental volumes of the "Castes and Tribes of Southern India" notes the use of *putkuli* in funeral rites of the Toda tribes. According to him (1909:156), ". . . within the *putkuli* (of the corpse) were stowed jaggery, a scroll of paper adorned with cowry shells, snuff, tobacco, coconuts, biscuits, various kinds of grain, ghee, boney..... A long purse containing a silver Japanese yen and an arcot rupee of East India Company was tied up in the *putkuli* close to the feet".

IV. MOTIFS IDENTIFIED IN THE *PUTKULI*

4.0 General

Use of same motif in pairs is called *twehdr pukaor,* where hills, peaks, sholas, valleys, slopes, etc , are represented symbolically, as the life and the culture of the Todas are closely interlinked with mother 'Nature'; while *tagaarsh pukaor* ("anklet motif") and *awkhofveirshy pukaor* ("cobra body design motif") are used on the outer fringe portions of both sides of the *putkuli*. Generally, *putkuli* with snake motif (i.e.*pob pukaor*)is used as a shroud.

Depending upon the purpose and use of it for a particular rites of passage, *putkuli* is designated by various names. For instance, the *putkuli* used as a shroud in wrapping the corpse during funeral rites is known as *pekkaadhar putkuli,* which is aimed in safe transportation of the diseased Toda spirit to the other world Contrary to this, the *putkuli* is also known by the motif it bears. For example, the *putkuli* bearing the pattern of the feather of peacock is referred to as *meshtufykon putkuli.*

4.1 Traditional Motifs incorporated in *putkuli*

Altogether 7 traditional motifs have been identified as being incorporated in *putkuli* as enlisted below:

S.No.	Name of the Traditional Motifs	Gloss
1.	modbiry *pukaor*	"motif of a flower of a marsby grass"
2	peshk *pukaor*	"motif of a giant squirrel"
3.	kwudrkorr *pukaor*	"motif of a boney-comb"
4.	awkhofkeirshy *pukaor*	"motif of body design of a cobra"
5.	tagaarsh *pukaor*	"motif of *tagaarsh*, the Toda anklet"
6.	kopan *pukaor*	"motif of wing design of a butterfly"
7.	poduwarsb *pukaor*	"motif of depiction of the cobra shaped flower"

4.2 Introduced Motifs incorporated in *putkuli*

In a later phase of their history, the Toda tribes have introduced 11 more motifs, having identified them from surrounding flora, fauna, celestial objects, man-made objects And they are listed below:

S.No.	Name of the Introduced Motifs	Gloss
1.	*Kaashth pukaor*	"Motif of the Exacum flower"
2.	*peersh pukaor*	"motif of the sun"
3.	*path pukaor*	"motif of a seated vulture"
4.	*tegol pukaor*	"motif of the moon"
5.	*kady pukaor*	"motif of the Nilgiri wild rose"
6.	*petzk pukaor*	"motif of a lamp"
7.	*pob pukoor*	"motif of a snake"
8.	*moni poof pukaor*	"motif of the 6'O clock flower"
9.	*ir kwehdr pukaor*	"motif of buffalo horn"
10	*nershkon pukaor*	"motif of wrist watch"
11.	*kon konody/kadoryem pukaor*	"motif of a pair of spectacles"

V. ROLE OF *PUTKULI* IN THE RITES OF PASSAGE OF THE TODAS

5.0 General

The *putkuli* not only occupies a prominent place in all the rites of passage of the Toda tribes of the Nilgiris but does a pivotal role as well. For instance, the *putkuli* is given and received by the groom and the bride respectively during important rites of passage such as pre-puberty marriage, pregnancy-binding rites. While the new born is received having wrapped up in *putkuli* the dead is transported to the other world having wrapped up in *putkuli*. And the acting chief mourner is covered from head to toe by means of his or her *putkuli*.

5.1 Giving and Receiving of *putkuli* during Pre-Puberty Marriage

Among the Toda tribes, normally a boy and a girl are betrothed at their young age. A young Toda girl is betrothed, to a young Toda boy even before she attains puberty. Such ceremony is referred as 'pre-puberty marraige [10] During this rites of passage, the Toda boy presents a *putkuli* to the girl to whom he is betrothed. However, the betrothed girl remains with her parents until she is of marriageable age.

Every year the giving of a new *putkuli* by the boy and receiving it by the girl is observed till the latter attains puberty. On attaining puberty, the girl leaves her parents and started to live with the boy wherein she is given a special *putkuli* of relatively thicker variety. Henceforth, both of them will lead their life as spouses.

5.2 Giving and Receiving of *putkuli* during Pregnancy - binding Rites

When the married Toda woman becomes pregnant for the first time, the Toda tribes observe unique rites of passage called ' pregnancy-binding rites'

As they were once practicing fraternal polyandry, in order to ascertain the biological fatherhood, the husband or one of his brothers will come forward to be the sociological father to the would-be child. While this is done by the biological father or one of his brothers by presenting a twig of the shrub *puv* (*Sophorea gluaca*)[11] fashioned in the form of a curvature with a centrally placed blade of the grass *nark* (*Andropogon schoenanthus*). This rites of passage is reported erroneously as 'bow-giving ceremony' by the anthropologists till date, having misconceived the 'curvature of the twig' as "bow" and the 'centrally placed blade of

grass' as "arrow". But, in reality, the former designates the dome of the hut while the latter its central beam. This is ascertained as the pregnant Toda woman asks her spouse 'whose is this?' or "what is this?" while receiving the so-called bow and arrow from the sociological father and the latter spells out thrice the name of his patri-clan in front of the assembled kindreds (of both consanguineals and affinals).

During this pregnancy — binding rites, the pregnant woman receives a specially prepared *putkuli* from her spouse and wears it throughout the ceremony.

5.3 *Putkuli* as an Important Clad in the Toda Funerals

The corpse, among the Todas, is clad in four different cloths. Of them, the innermost cloth is black in colour (akin to that worn by the dairy priest (*paalaol*). Next to it lies a *putkuli* decorated with blue and red(unlike the usual pattern of black and red) embroidery[12] outside which again a plain white cloth is covered over by a red cotton cloth.

Within the *putkuli* of the corpse, things such as jaggery, scroll of paper adorned with cowry shells, snuff, tobacco, coconut, biscuits, grains, butter, honey are stowed. Further, a long purse (of cloth) containing some coins in it is tied up in the *putkuli*, close to the feet.[13]

During the funeral rites, shortly after the arrival of the Kota musicians, signals are exchanged, by wavying of *putkuli* between the assembled kindreds and a small detachment of menfolk some distance off.

At the funeral of a married woman performance of three rites by a daughter or daughter-in-law is considered mandatory viz., (i) Tying a leafy branch of the shrub *thiviri* (*Atylosia candolleana*) in the *putkuli* of the corpse; (ii) Tying balls of thread and cowry shells on the arm of the corpse, just above the elbow; and (iii) Setting fire to the funeral pyre.

On the occasion of the funeral of an unmarried girl, a small boy is selected from among the relatives of the dead girl and taken by his father in search of a twig of the shrub *puv*(*Sophorea gluaca*) and a blade of the grass *nark* (*Andropogon schoenanthus*) which are brought to the spot where the corpse is lying. The mother of the deceased girl then withdraws the right hand of the corpse from its *putkuli* and the boy places the grass and the twig in that hand. Later on, lemons, plantains, grains, jaggery, honey comb and butter are also placed in the pocket of the *putkuli* and stitched with woolen threads in a circular pattern. Now, the father of the boy takes the *putkuli* of his son and re-arranges it over him so as to cover his body from head to foot. In this position, the boy is made to remain outside of the hut till the

morning of the next day. And the entire near relatives of the boy and his dead bride watches this observance throughout the night.

During the funeral of unmarried boy, in the same manner, a girl is selected and covered with her *putkuli* from head to foot while a metal vessel filled with jaggery, grains, butter, honey, etc., which was placed for a short time within the folds of the *putkuli* of the corpse is subsequently burnt on the funeral pyre. The girl is made to remain, having covered by her *putkuli* from head to foot, outside the hut till next morning, watched through the dreary hours of the night by her own relatives and that of her dead groom.

VI. REMOVAL/PARTIAL REMOVAL/RE-ARRANGING OF *PUTKULI* -A GESTICULATION OF REVERENCE

6.0 General

Among the Toda tribes, the removal or partial removal or re-arranging of *putkuli* is considered as a gesticulation of reverence.[14] Apart from the cover up of the entire body from head to foot by means of *putkuli* of oneself as in the case of funeral rites - it is observed in other domains of the intangible cultural heritage of the Todas as well in the following cultural practices:

6.1 *Putkuli* as Gesticulation of Reverence

i. The young Toda boys indulge in various kinds of games to pass their leisure time. 'Observance of mock funeral rites' is one such tribal games observed by the Toda boys. During the mock funeral rites the boy who plays the leading role of the sacrificial buffalo, strips off his *putkuli* and disappear from sight over the brow of a nearby low hillock.

ii. Whenever the Toda tribes happen to walk over the Paikara river (which is sacred to them) they observe the practice of taking their right arm (which is usually masked within the *putkuli*) out of their *putkuli*, as a mark of respect.

iii. While entering the sacred spaces such as cairn circle, dairy of *paalaol*, temple, conical temple the Toda tribes are observed to re-arrange their *putkuli* to unmask the right arm.

iv. As a mark of respect exhibited towards the *paalaol*, the Todas are found to observe re-arranging of their *putkuli* so as to lay the right arm bare.

v. Even while attempting to lift the globular stones (lieing in the vicinity of their hamlets) to exhibit their virility the Toda lads re-arrange their *putkuli*.

VII. SUMMARY

The Toda tribe, one of the few tribal groups in the world has been studied extensively by people both specialist and public. The culture complex of the Toda tribes is unique both tangibly and intangibly. A few years ago, depicting the intangible cultural heritage, apart from depiction of tangible cultural heritage was started to be emphasized by the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

Putkuli,the colourful craftefact of the Todas is studied, in this monograph, not only as an object of tangible culture but its aspects of intangibility as well. Such a micro-level study on the *putkuli* of the Toda tribes is a pioneer attempt - in the art historical study of the tribal arts and crafts of the Nilgiris.

A typical *putkuli* is an embroidered textile made of unbleached bandwoven white cloth consisting of two pieces of material stitched back to back with embroidery in black and red. As the embroidery of *putkuli* is executed by counting the threads, the resultant designs emanate as angular forms and consequently look like geometric forms to casual observations.

Among the Todas, the *putkuli* is worn by all men, women, boys and girls during ritual observances of secular and sacred domains. The former domain includes all rites of passage while the latter domain includes consecration of temples, visiting the priest of the temple.

In this study, it is established beyond any doubt that the embroidering of *putkuli* is an indigenous handicraft of the Toda womenfolk learned in their young age by participant-observation from the elderly kindred women like grandmothers, mother, mother's sisters, sisters, sisters-in-law. Embroidering the *putkuli* is done with the help of steel needle and woolen threads in black and red(and quite rarely in blue and green as well). Wearing of *putkuli* is conceived as a tribal identify of the Toda tribes.

Earlier scholars who worked among the Todas of the Nilgiris like W.E.Marshall (1873), J.W. Breeks (1873), W. Francis (1906), E. Thurston (1909), M.B. Emeneau (1937) have made considerable observations on *putkuli*, in their respective monumental works.

While the traditional black and red woolen threads are termed together as *kaag* the motifs emanating out of the embroidery are termed *pukaor* and the resultant end product, the embroidered textile as *putkuli*.

The various traditional motifs and the motifs incorporated at a later period are identified and listed, in this monograph. Depending upon the motifs incorporated and or the rites of passage associated with, the *putkuli* is also identified in varied names.

In this study, the role played by the *putkuli* in the various rites of passage such as pre-puberty marriage, pregnancy-binding rites, funeral ceremony are dealt with in detail. Giving and receiving of *putkuli* in these rites of passage are also detailed out

Removal/Partial removal/Re-arranging of *putkuli* as gesticulation of reverence is also observed and documented, in this present work.

VIII. CONCLUSION

It is established, in this present study, beyond any reasonable doubt that the handicraft of embroidering the *putkuli* was in vogue among the Todas as an indigenous knowledge system-even before the arrival of Ms. Catherine F. Ling of the Church of England Zenana Mission Society in 1890, disproving the argument of the Badugas, a neighbouring non-tribal community of the Nilgiris.

Although wearing of *putkuli*, the embroidered mantle by the Todas form a tribal identity, the tribal embroidery is exploited by the Todas themselves for generating extra remuneration to their tribal economy. And consequently, the different textile items such as half coat, skirt, kerchief, shoulder bag, purse, teapoy mat, sofa cover, cushion cover are handicrafted by the Todas, bearing their tribal embroidery mostly in black and red. However, to enhance the aesthetics to the ethnic-embroidery new colours such as blue, green, brown are also given entry into the colour scheme of the Toda embroidery.

Identification of *putkuli* as a tangible object of culture, bearing intangibility as well both in the secular domains (such as 'rites of passage') and the sacred domains (such as 'consecration of temple') could ascertain the significant position occupied by the *putkuli* within the cultural milieu of the Todas.

And the removal/partial removal/re-arranging of the *putkuli* as a gesticulation of reverence within the religious organization of the Todas reiterates the fact that the *putkuli* occupies a prominent place as a tangible object of cultural heritage.

FOOT NOTES

[1] 'Tangible Culture' and 'Intangible Culture' are the current terminologies introduced by the International Council of Museums (ICOM) for the earlier technical jargons of 'Material Culture' and 'Non-material Culture' respectively.

[2] In order to differentitate the 'process' (viz., 'Craft') with the 'product' (viz., 'Craft material'), the author of this work has coined the term 'Craftefact' - on the line of its corresponding term 'artefact' (for details (Cf Maheswaran, C 2007))

[3] This information which was revealed to the author of this work by a Baduga one Shri R. Venugopal of the 'Save Nilgiris Campaign', a Non-Governmental Organization of the Nilgiris has triggered him to investigate the origin of *putkuli*.

[4] Dr Tarun Chhabra, a dentist and non-Toda activist who is the Founder-President of the 'Toda Nalavaazhvu Sangam', an NGO which functions in the Nilgiris is in possession of a single strip of handwoven cloth, bearing almost all the traditional and recent motifs of *putkuli* (Cf Annexure - III).

[5] To extract the fibre, first the bark of the plant is thrown into a pot of boiling water to which ashes have been added. After boiling for a few hours the bark is taken out and the fibre is extracted.

[6] Traditionally, the *putkuli* is embroidered with black and red colour threads of wool. However, woolen threads of blue, green, brown are also used in embroidering the *putkuli*, on ceremonial lines and or commercial lines. Interestingly enough, black and red are the two colours used by the primitive ethnic groups throughout the world.

[7] This is gleaned from the description of *putkuli* by Colonel Marshall(1873:49) as follows "..... and sometimes with a little embroidery in blue ....."

[8] Thus, wearing of *putkuli* by the Toda people is construed as one of their prominent ethnic identities.

[9] "The entire supply of ration commodities through family card such as sugar, rice, wheat could be brought to the bousehold by means of *putkuli*", reports Smt Vasamalli, a Toda activist of the Kaarsh Mund, nearby Thamizhagam of Udhagamandalam in the Nilgiris.

[10] Such 'pre-puberty marriage' is still in vogue among the Todas. Interestingly enough, the Kotas, another neighbouring tribal community of the Nīlgiris is also observed to adhere the conduct of pre-puberty marriage among themselves.

[11] This shrub is used by the Kota tribes as a broom in cleaning an arena for ritual purification purposes during pollution breaking ceremony while it is used to build menstrual hut among the Paniya tribes. Hence, it is suggested that the study of ethnobotanical aspects of the shrub *Sophorea gluaca* may be taken up for further researcb

[12] This colour scheme differentiates the *pekaadhar putkuli* (, the *putkuli* used for wrapping the corpse) with that of other types of *putkuli*. Another feature wherein the *pekaadhar putkuli* remains unique is its pattern of snake motif, viz., *pob pukaor*.)

[13] The double stitched *putkuli*, thus not only form a mantle while living but a cover as well in accommodating the desirable objects along with the dead persons.

[14] Further research in this direction could unravel much more facts and thus illuminate the various facets of Toda Ethnograpby.

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ANNEXURE-I

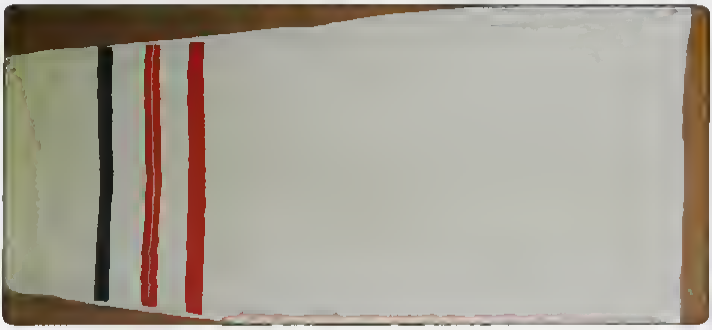
THE EMBROIDERED TEXTILES OF THE TODA TRIBES OF THE NILGIRIS (in the Collection of the Government Museums et Chennai & Udhagamandalam)

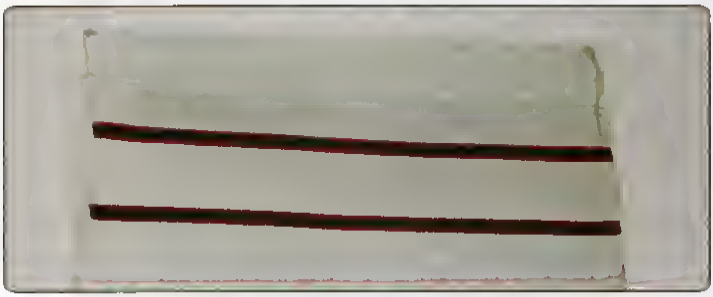
S.No	Acc No	Description	Museum	Mode of Acquisition
1	1357	*Putkuli*	Government Museum, Chennai	Through purchase
2	1404	*Putkuli*	Government Museum, Chennai	Through purchase
3	1400	Cloth purse (Red in colour)	Government Museum, Chennai	Through purchase
4	1401	Cloth purse (Yellow in colour)	Government Museum, Chennai	Through purchase
5	1402	Cloth purse (larger in size than of 1400, 1401 and 1403)	Government Museum, Chennai	Through purchase
6	1403	Cloth purse(dirty brown in colour)	Government Museum, Chennai	Through purchase
7	1-92/TC/UDM	Skirt - White in colour - with blue and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
8	2-92/TC/UDM	Skirt-white in colour - with black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
9	3-92/TC/UDM	Skirt-white in colour - with black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
10	4-92/TC/UDM	*Putkuli*	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
11	5-92/TC/UDM	Shawl - with brown embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
12	6-92/TC/UDM	Shawl-with black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase

13.	7-92/TC/UDM	Shawl-brown in colour - with bleck and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
14.	8-92/TC/UDM	Shawl-brown in colour- with blue, black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
15.	9-92/TC/UDM	Wall hanging- white in colour - with blue, black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
16.	10-92/TC/UDM	Cushion cover -white in colour- with black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
17.	11-92/TC/UDM	Cushion cover-white in colour- with black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
18.	12-92/TC/UDM	Cushion cover - white in colour- with black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
19.	13-92/TC/UDM	Table Cloth (2 Nos) - white in colour - with blue, black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
20	14-92/TC/UDM	Shoulder bag - white in colour - with black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
21	15-92/TC/UDM	Border bit	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
22	16-92/TC/UDM	Table runner/Teapoy cover- white in colour - with green, black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
23	17-92/TC/UDM	Napkin-white in colour - with black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase
24	18-92/TC/UDM	Purse -white in colour - with blue, black and red embroidery	Government Museum, Udhagamandalam	Through purchase

ANNEUXRE-II

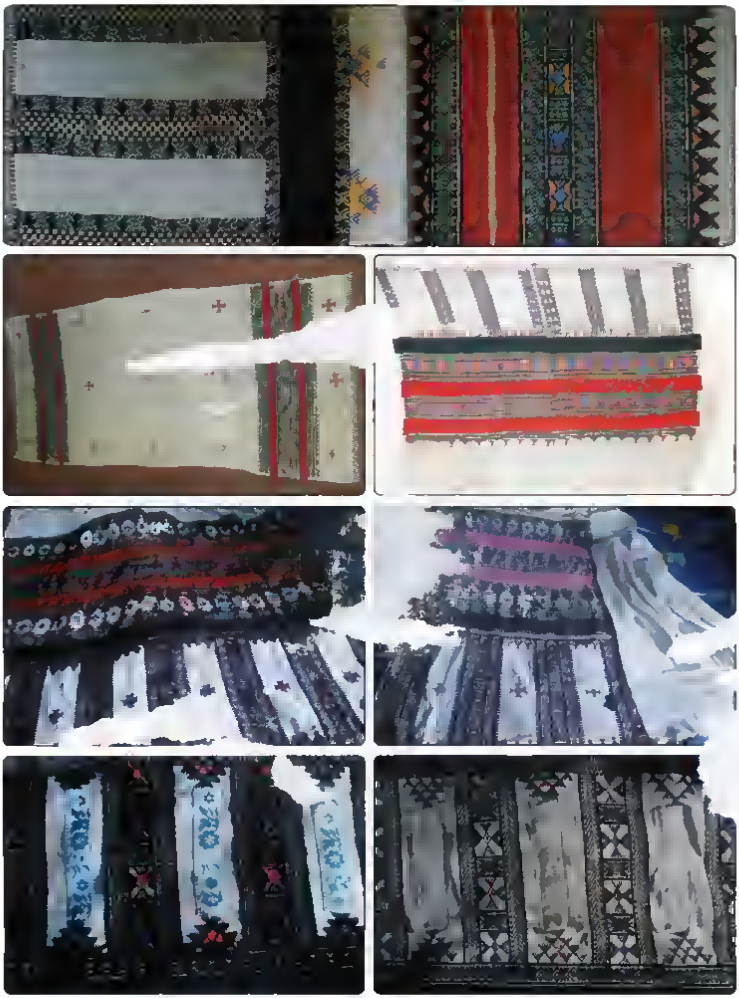
PHOTOGRAPHS DEPICTING THE INTANGIBILITY
OF THE
TANGIBLE *PUTKULI*





TODA WOMEN ENGAGED IN EMBROIDERY

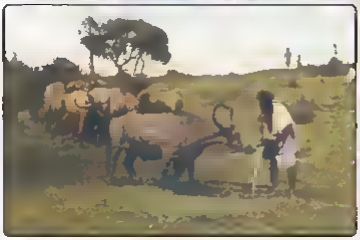
PUTKULI, THE TYPICAL EMBROIDERED TEXTILE



TODAS CLAD IN *PUTKULI*
DURING CONSECRATION OF THEIR TEMPLE

TODAS CLAD IN *PUTKULI*
DURING THE PREGNANCY-BINDING RITES

TODAS CLAD IN *PUTKULI*
DURING SOCIO-CULTURAL ACTIVITIES



ANNEUXRE-III

MOTIFS OF THE EMBROIDERED TEXTILES
(Courtesy : Tarun Chhabra, 2008)

The following are the principal embroidery motifs

(a) ***Meettaafykann pukhaar*** [*mɪ ʈu fykonpuxu r*] (Figure 11.17). This is an embroidery motif inspired by the patterns on a peacock's tail feathers. The first syllable of the Toda name for the pattern is a shortened form of *mee(r)shtoofykonn* [*mɪ ʂtu fykoɳ*], meaning "peafowl (*mee(r)sh* [*mɪ ʂ*]) feather (*toofy* [*tu fy*]) eye/star) (*konn* [*koɳ*])", hence, "the star on a peacock's tail". Peacocks are glamorous, if rare, visitors to the Upper Nilgiris, so it is not surprising that they inspired Toda embroiderers to create this attractive pattern, comprising various elaborations of an essentially diamond shape.

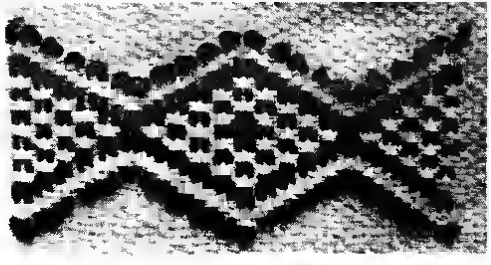


Figure 11.17. *Meettoofykonn pukhoor* [*mɪ ʈu fykonpuxu r*], or "eye of the peacock's feather" design (photograph: Tarun Chhabra, 2006).

(b) ***Kopaan pukhoor*** [*kopa npuxu r*] (Figure 11.18). This is the "butterfly" pattern, so called because it is inspired by the patterned wings of these "flying jewels" that are omnipresent around the hamlets as they flit from one wild flower to another.

Figure 11.18. *Kopaan pukhooror* [*kopa npuxu r*] or "butterfly" pattern (photograph: Tarun Chhabra, 2006).

(c) ***Modhehry pukhooror*** [*moðhrypuxu r*] (Figure 11.19). This is a pattern inspired by and named after the "mat" plant (*Cyperus digitatus*[21]), which grows in large clumps with distinctively stiff and spiky flowers.

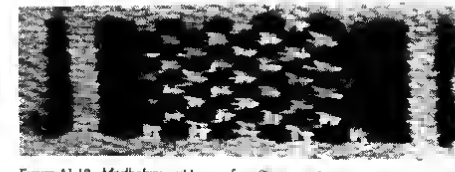


Figure 11.19. *Modhehry pukhooror* [*moðhrypuxu r*] or "mat plant" pattern (photograph: Tarun Chhabra, 2006).

(d) ***Awkkofelkh(r)shy pukhoor*** [*o xofe ʂypuxu r*] (Figure 11.20). This is a motif inspired by the patterns on the body of the *nawkhorof* [*no xorof*] or cobra. For Todas the cobra is sacred, the protector of their dairy temples. (I have heard Toda priests talk of the presence of cobras at temple sites, especially when a temple has

[21] P. F. Fyson, *Flora of South Indian Hill Stations* (1932), pp. 636-7.

been left unused for a long period of time.) The cobra motif is usually embroidered on two parallel sides with the *kwudrkorr pukhoor* [*kwu·rkorpuxu·r*] honeycomb patterns (see below) in the centre. The motif may also be intricately combined with other patterns to achieve fairly complex-looking tapestries.

Figure 11.20 *Awkhofeikh(r)shy pukhoor* [*o·xofe·sypuxu·r*] or cobra pattern (photograph: A.R. Walker, 2007)

(e) ***Thill(zh)yfukawtt,yt pukhoor*** [*tilyfuko·tytpuxu·r*] (Figure 11.21). The literal meaning of this name is "to enter the [buffalo pen] gate-post and embroider". *Thill(zh)y* [*tily*] are the gateposts of the sacred buffalo pen, which have holes in them to accommodate the bars that close the pen. The number of holes in the pen-post is symbolically related to the number of threads that the embroiderer employs. For this simple but striking motif, the embroiderer uses two colours of thread, black and red, in a manner that produces a pattern of different thread colours at the centre and edges of the pattern.

Figure 11.21 *Thill(zh)yfukawt,yt pukhoor* [*tilyfuko·tytpuxu·r*] or "entering the [buffalo pen] gate-post and embroidering pattern (grey is red and black is black) (photograph: A.R. Walker, 2007)

(f) ***Wehdrykht pukhoor*** [*wiyxtpuxu·r*]. This is a simple pattern (Figure 11.22) that usually serves as a border to other more elaborate designs. Unlike most others, it is embroidered in rows at right angles to the direction of the main pattern. As the embroidery is executed in one continuous line with no spaces, both the obverse and the reverse aspects present a similar appearance. The motif is said to correspond to the basic pattern, called *mhill(ah)thatyt* [*miɬtɬyt*], of stripped cane tied to the traditional barrel-vaulted temples and homes. The motif also reflects the pattern created for the facades of these traditional buildings by

tying peeled canes over underlying rolls of grass, a procedure Todas call *podhaarrdeht* [*po·ðə·rðət*].

Figure 11.22 ***Wehdrykht pukhoor*** [*wiyxtpuxu·r*] or "stripped cane" pattern (photograph: A. R. Walker, 2007)

(g) ***Ehpothill(zh)ykhm pukhoor*** [*ipotɬiyxmpuxu·r*] (Figure 11.23). This is a pattern that is closely allied to the previous two. As the very same term "*ehpothill(zh)ykhm*" is used for the intricate crisscross pattern of the stripped cane braiding on temples, we may infer that it was the temple's

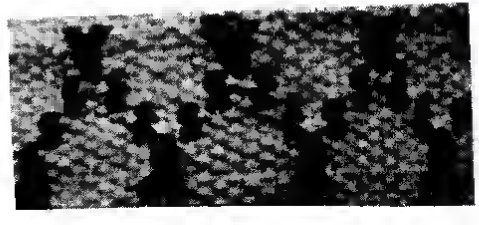


Figure 11.23 *Ehpothill(zh)ykhm pukhoor* [*ipotɬiyxmpuxu·r*] or *mhee(r)shkehfy pukhoor* [*mɨ·ʃkɨfypuxu·r*] "hare's ears" pattern (photograph: Tarun Chhabra, 2006)

cane braiding that inspired this embroidery pattern. On the other hand, as an embroidery pattern, *ehpothill(zh)ykhm* is also called *mhee(r)shkehfy pukhoor* [*mɨ·ʃkɨfypuxu·r*] or "hare's ears" pattern. This is due to its close resemblance, at the apex of each pair of threads, to a hare's head.

(b)

(h) *Ocvett pukhoor* [*ocfetpuxu·r*] (Figure 11.24) The word *oc* means "edge" and, as the name suggests, this type of pattern is usually embroidered at the edges of a garment. It is another traditional embroidery motif that has been inspired by Toda architectural technology, once again by the cane braiding work that is employed for temples. Just as the stripped cane binding (called *mawkm* [*mo·km*]) prevents the building's inner structure from falling apart, the *ocvett* embroidery work prevents the edges of a piece of cloth from fraying. The basic pattern is that of a "V", or two Vs, end-to-end, so that they resemble an "X".

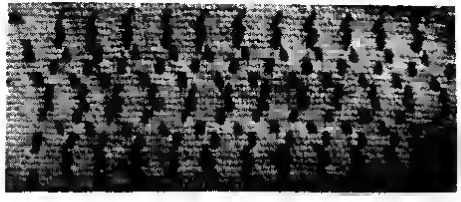


Figure 11.24 *Ocvett pukhoor* [*ocfetpuxu·r*] or "edge" pattern (photograph: Tarun Chhabra, 2006).

(i) *Kwudrkurr pukhoor* [*kwuṛkoṛpuxu·r*] This is the honeycomb pattern (Figure 11.25). The Todas are enthusiastic honey gatherers and have a unique method of harvesting honey from the hollows within trees.[22] (Prehistoric paintings on rock surfaces demonstrate the antiquity of the technique.) Given the Todas' enthusiasm for honey, it is hardly surprising that stylized bees and honeycombs with their brood (*korr*) inside have found their place among Toda embroidery patterns.

[22] See Tarun Chhabra, "Todas of the Nilgiri Hills: Where Honey Enters Every Facet of Life," *Beekeeping and Development* 52 (Sept., 1999): 8-9.

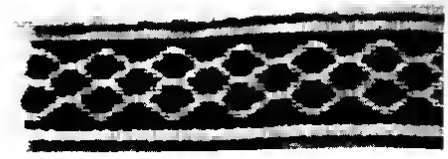


Figure 11.25 *Kwudrkurr pukhoor* [*kwuṛkoṛpuxu·r*], or "honeycomb" pattern (photograph: Tarun Chhabra, 2006).

(j) *Kinazhk pukhoor* [*kinaškpuxu·r*] This a pattern (Figure 11.26) inspired by the delicate flowers of the Nilgiri lemon thyme (*Micromeria biflora*)[23], which Todas call *kinazhttehzhky* [*kinaštšky*]. The plant is one of the several treasures of indigenous Nilgiri flora that feature prominently

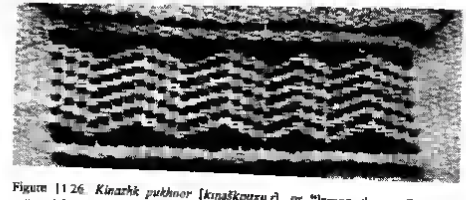


Figure 11.26 *Kinazhk pukhoor* [*kinaškpuxu·r*], or "lemon thyme flower" pattern (photograph: Tarun Chhabra, 2006).

[23] Fyson, *Flora of South Indian Hill Stations* (1932), p. 474.

in Toda culture. In this case the Todas use the leaves for medicinal purposes, they also rub the crushed leaves onto a young buffalo calf, thus masking the animal's own odour and so permitting it to be fed by a surrogate mother. The Todas have an additional name for the *kinazhk* embroidery pattern. It is *moodd noo(r)sh pukhoor* [*mu dnu spuxu·r*], "the three-thread pattern".

(k) ***Twehhdr pukhoor*** (Figure 11.27). Literally, the name means "the pattern in pairs". It seems that this is the most ancient surviving Toda embroidery pattern. In embroidery parlance it is called *ehhdd karkwehhdr* [*e·dkarkwə·r*], which has become an alternative name for the pattern in pairs. It is said that the pattern is inspired by certain prominent hills, peaks, slopes, *sholas* (Upper Nilgiri woodlands) and valleys of the Toda homeland. Traditionally, this was the motif to be embroidered on a new cloak to envelop a corpse and so ensure safe passage for the deceased to the realm of the dead. The *ehhdd karkwehhdr* pattern is mentioned in the paired units of several songs, the singers using it as a generic term for the community's embroidery arts.

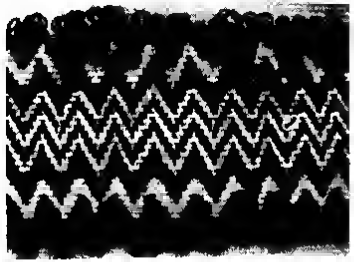


Figure 11.27. *Twehhdr pukhoor* [*twə·puxu·r*], or "pattern in pairs" pattern (photograph: Tarun Chhabra, 2006).

There is no doubt that this is the most important of all Toda embroidery patterns and the only one Toda refer to as *ehtwehdd pukhoor* [*ətwə́dpuxu·r*], "the big pattern". Even today, when younger women seldom embroider traditional patterns, they still execute this one. Given the great cultural importance of *twehhdr pukhoor*, I shall choose it as my example of just how Toda women produce a *pukhoor* or embroidery pattern.

The *twehhdr* pattern may be represented visually by the grid-based sketch in Fig. 11.28 below. The Todas' basic embroidery technique is to count the threads of the off-white base woven material and then cross-stitch to form the desired pattern. In the figure, the numbered rows of the design are vertical. Black boxes represent stitches that are visible on the obverse (the side that would normally be visible), and white boxes represent stitches where the thread passes on the reverse. In the areas labelled "obverse loop" at the top and bottom of each vertical row, the stitch forms an unusual loose loop that some embroiderers employ at the ends (Figure 11.27, top and bottom) for a special effect. It is precisely due to the loose looping of this obverse stitch that most non-Todas see the obverse side of an embroidered cloth as having a relatively untidy appearance and are surprised to learn that, for the Todas themselves, this is the display side.

In my description of the way this pattern is produced, "reverse stitch" means that the thread is carried on the reverse aspect, while the numeral that follows denotes the number of threads the embroiderer counts before reinserting her needle. Similarly, "obverse" means that the needle is taken on the obverse side of the cloth, and the numeral that follows denotes the number of threads counted. All portions designated as reverse stitch (R) are therefore seen as white gaps or spaces on the obverse side of the cloth, but can be seen as thread patterns on the reverse side, and all portions designated as obverse stitch (O) are seen as thread patterns on the obverse side and as blank white spaces on the reverse aspect. The obverse loop (OL) begins, continues and ends the embroidery process. Therefore, there is one obverse loop before the first reverse stitch and also after the last reverse stitch of each vertical row, and this obverse loop is then extended over to the next row. The obverse loop does not form part of the technique *per se* and is not seen on the reverse side at all. However, it is seen clearly on the obverse side, where it often forms a border to the main pattern.

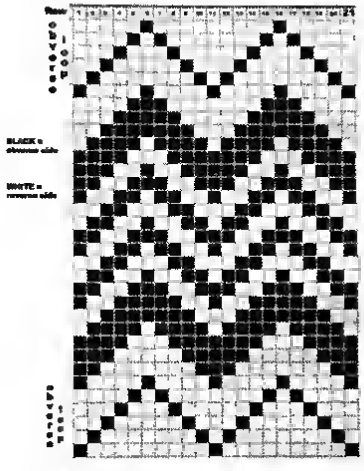


Figure 11.28 *Twekhdr* [*twɨ̀ɾ*] pattern against grid (Tarun Chhabra, 2006)

The visual representation in Figure 11.28 may thus be written as follows (where OL = obverse loop, O = obverse stitch, R = reverse stitch). Each row consists of a pair of threads. Row 1 is worked beginning at the bottom, row 2 is worked in the opposite direction, row 3 is again worked beginning at the bottom, and so on.

Row 1 OL – R 4 – O 4 – R 2 – O 2 – R 2 – O 2 – R 2 – O 4 – R 4 – OL.

Row 2 (begins one thread above the previous) OL – R 4 – O 4 – R 2 – O 2 – R 2 – O 2 – R 2 – O 4 – R 4 – OL.

Row 3 (begins one thread above the previous) OL – R 4 – O 4 – R 2 – O 2 – R 2 – O 2 – R 2 – O 4 – R 4 – OL.

Rows 4 to 6 also follow the same technique and each commences one thread above the previous one. After the 'peak' is reached at row 6, the descent begins

Row 7 (begins one stitch below the previous) OL – R 4 – O 4 – R 2 – O 2 – R 2 – O 2 – R 2 – O 4 – R 4 – OL

Rows 8 to 11 continue with the same technique and each row commences one thread **below** the previous one

Following row 11, rows 2 to 11 are repeated to make rows 12 to 21 and this sequence is continued to achieve the desired length.

(i) *Peshk pukhoor* [*peʂkpuxʊ r̀*] (Figure 11.29). This is a pattern named after the giant squirrels commonly seen moving majestically from tree to tree. It is copied from the three-lined pattern (also called *annil*) that appears on the squirrels' upper body as seen from above. The *peshk pukhoor* is another pattern embroidered on a cloak for the dead.

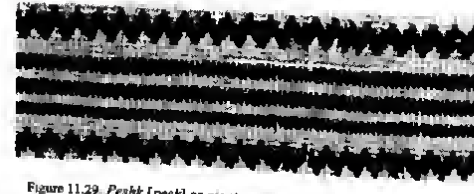


Figure 11.29 *Peshk* [*peʂk*] or giant squirrel pattern (photograph Tarun Chhabra, 2006)

(m) *Tagaarsh pukhoor* [*taga gpuxu r*] is a pattern (Figure 11.30) that is modelled and named after the decorative chain hung on certain occasions around the necks of sacred buffaloes, while Toda women wear a smaller version (with identical name) as a jewellery item. The pattern is embroidered on the fringe portions of the cloak, providing, along with the previous-mentioned *pexhk pukhoor* pattern, a kind of border to the cloak.

Figure 11.30 *Tagaarsh* [taga g] or "decorative chain" pattern (photograph A.R. Walker, 2007)

(n) *Pemilodh pukhoor* [*pemiloθpuxu r*] (Figure 11.31) This is the "without a back" pattern. Another ancient pattern, its name is based on the way the threads are drawn during the embroidering process so that there is no central "backbone" to the pattern.

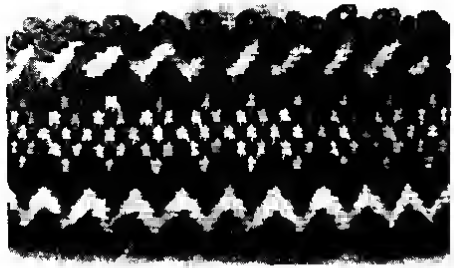
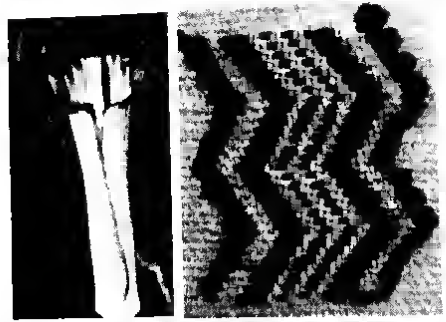


Figure 11.31 *Pemilodh pukhoor* [*pemiloθpuxu r*] or "without a back" pattern (photograph Tarun Chhabra, 2006)

(o) *Poddwa(r)shk pukhoor* [*podwaʂkpuxu r*] (Figure 11.31) In Toda *Poddwa(r)shk* refers to the Cobra flowers (*Arisaema tortuosum* and *A. leschenaulti* family (Figure 11.32) that come in such striking colours and patterns in the sholas of the upper Nilgiris.[24] The pattern is said to replicate the ribbing on the lily's petals.



Figures 11.32 & 11.33 A Cobra lily (left) and the *Poddwa(r)shk pukhoor* [*podwaʂkpuxu r*] or "cobra lily" embroidery pattern (photographs: Tarun Chhabra, 1990s [left] and A.R. Walker, 2007 [right])

(p) *Pee(r)sh pukhoor* [*pi·ʂpuxu r*] (Figure 11.34) This is the sun (*pee(r)sh* [*pi ʂ*]) pattern and is designed to replicate the sun's rays. Symbols of the sun (along with the moon) are often represented in carved form on Toda homes and temples and have, rather naturally, been incorporated also into Toda embroidery patterns.

[24] Fyson, *Flora of South Indian Hill Stations* (1932), pp. 622-3

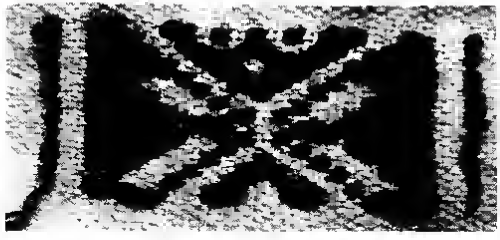


Figure 11.34. *Pee(r)sh pukhoor* [pi·ʂpuxu·r] or "sun" pattern (photograph: A. R. Walker, 2007)

(q) ***Tehgehll pukhoor*** [tɪgɪ̈lpuxu·r] (Figure 11.35). This is the moc (Toda, "*tehgehll*") pattern (see also explanation for item [p] just above).

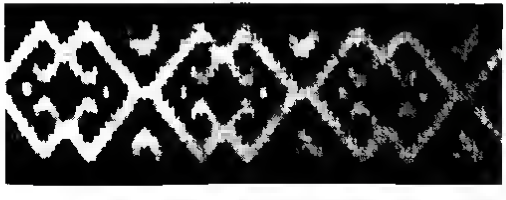


Figure 11.35. *Tehgehll pukhoor* [tɪgɪ̈lpuxu·r] pattern (crescent moons at top and bottom) (photograph: A. R. Walker, 2007)

At this juncture I should remind the reader that most of the traditional designs that I have described just above were once used exclusively for the embellishment of cloaks for the dead. Today, however, they are routinely embroidered on *poothkull(zh)y* worn by Todas as everyday garments. (On the other hand, these days the *todrp* is not adorned with embroidery at all.) Looking at old photographs taken several decades ago, the Todas' everyday cloaks appear to be only sparsely embroidered in contrast to modern-day norms.

TODA EMBROIDERY REMAINS AN EVOLVING ART FORM. Consequently, numerous new patterns have been developed since the days when cloth was embroidered only for the dead. Nonetheless, some of the more recent patterns remain based on ancient themes, mostly inspired by nature. The *awrrmonipoof pukhoor* [*o·rmonypu·fpuxu·r*] or "Six O'clock flower" pattern (Figure 11.36) is an example. Todas have traditionally used flowers to denote the time of the day and the most important of these is the

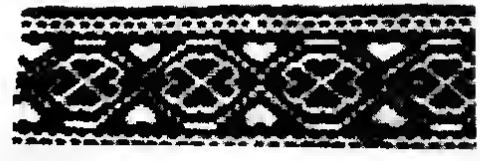


Figure 11.36. *Awrrmonipoof pukhoor* [*o·rmonypu·fpuxu·r*] or "Six O'clock flower" pattern (photograph: A. R. Walker, 2007)

Six O'clock flower or Evening Primrose (*Oenothera tetraptera*)[25] that blooms at that time irrespective of weather conditions.

There is at least one pattern inspired by birds, namely the *pat pukhoor* [*paθpuxu·r*] or "vulture" pattern, which resembles the profile of a vulture in characteristic crouched position (Figure 11.37). Vultures, it should be remarked, were once common in the Upper Nilgiris, but have almost disappeared since about fifty years ago.

[25] Fyson, *Flora of South Indian Hill Stations* (1932), p. 236.

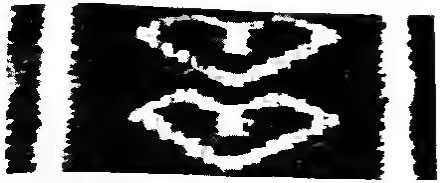


Figure 11.37 *Paðh pukhoor* [*paðpuxu·r*] or "vulture" pattern (photograph Tarun Chhabra, 2006)

As we might expect, Toda women are unable to resist representing their wonderful buffaloes, so among the animal patterns is the *ehr kwehhdr pukhoor* [*ikwi·ppuxu·r*] the "buffalo horn" pattern (Figure 11.38)

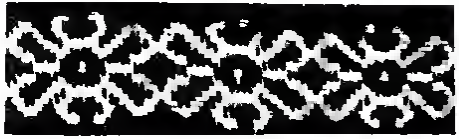


Figure 11.38. *Ehr kwehhdr pukhoor* [*ikwi·ppuxu·r*], the "buffalo horn" pattern (the curving lines at top and bottom of the full, almost flower-like, pattern) (photograph A.R. Walker 2007)

There are also many recent designs that are not inspired by nature, as, for example, the *pell(zh)k pukhoor* [*pöḷḷpuxu·r*] or "lamp" pattern" (Figure 11.39), the "H" *pukhoor* (Figure 11.40), and the *kaddoryem pukhoor* [*kaḍoryyempuxu·r*] or "wristwatch" pattern (Figure 11.41). Then there is the well-known *arybettvoy pukhoor* [*arybeṭṭoypuxu·r*] or "crazy" pattern (Figure 11.42) This name was acquired, not because of any quirk in the pattern *per se*; on the contrary, according to the story of its origin, the embroiderer produced such a fine pattern that, when she showed it to her neighbour, the latter was so

consumed with jealousy that she dismissed it by saying "what kind of crazy pattern is this!" Ever since, it has been called *arybettvoy pukhoor*, the "crazy pattern"

Figure 11.39 *Pell(zh)k pukhoor* [*pöḷḷpuxu·r*], or "lamp" pattern" (photograph A.R. Walker 2007).

Figure 11.40 The "H" *pukhoor* [*puxu·r*] (photograph A.R. Walker, 2007)

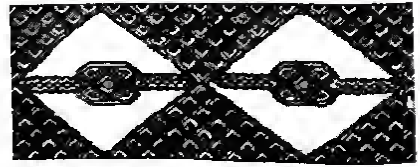


Figure 11.41 *Kaddoryem pukhoor* [*kaḍoryyempuxu·r*] or "wristwatch" pattern (photograph A.R. Walker, 2007)

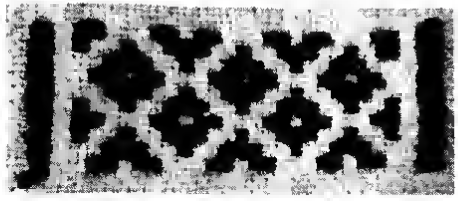


Figure 11.42 *Arybeeŋoypuxur* [*arybeẽŋoypuxur*] or "crazy" pattern (see page 213 for explanation of name) (photograph A.R. Walker, 2007)

There are a great many other such "modern" designs, but as I have already far exceeded my allocated space for this chapter, these will have to suffice as examples of the Toda women's love of innovation in their embroidery endeavours.

THERE ARE SOME OLD SONGS that describe the traditional Toda garb in detail and even other general songs have some pair units that mention the cloak and the embroidery, along with the jewellery, viz **"*Twehhdr pukhoor* / *Karkwehhdrsin*"** (see just below). Here are some song pair-units related to traditional garb that are cleverly adapted and added to songs by composers to suit a particular occasion:

Twehhdr pukhoor [*Twɨ ŋpuxu r*] / ***Karkwehhdrsin*** [*Karkwɨŋsɨn*] // The *Twehhdr* pattern matches well with the special kind of gold earrings. (As we have already seen, *twehhdr pukhoor* is likely the oldest surviving Toda embroidery pattern and means the "pattern in pairs". It is also called *ehhdd karrkwehhdr* [*e d̪karkwɨ̈*] or *swehdr pukhoor* [*swɨ̈puxu·r*], referring to a special kind of gold earring called *karkwehhdrsin* [*karkwɨ̈rsɨn*] or, more correctly, *ehhkwehhdrsin* [*ɨ̈·kwɨ̈rsɨn*], which look as if they are adorned with miniature buffalo horns. *Kwehhdr* means horns and *sin* is gold.)

Ocoty pan/ Karnawthaag [*ocɨ·ðypan/ karnoːt̪ka g̈*] // The embroidery is executed on the edges of the cloak and the use of black thread presents a good appearance. (*Oc* refers to the "edges" of the embroidery work and, as mentioned earlier, this is how the *ocwaa* pattern acquired its name. *Ocoty* is from *Oceedhy* [*ocɨ·ðy*], meaning "sideways". *Kaag* is the traditional black thread.)

Mawttaw twehhdr [*mo·t̪o·twɨ̈r*] / ***Mawk twehhdr*** [*mo·ktwɨ̈r*] // The cloak looks very beautiful when adorned with the *twehhdr* motif that matches with everything.

Pettkwadr putty [*Pɛtkwaŋpaðy*] / ***Mutvehn ehhit*** [*mutfɨ̈n ɨ̈·t*] // They are holding large umbrellas with cane handles; they are wearing gold earrings studded with pearls.

Pehtagaa(r)sh [*Pɨtaga·s*] / ***Pehttwehl(zh)fodhyn*** [*Pɨ̈twɨ̈floðy*] //She is wearing an attractive silver chain around her neck; she is wearing a special armlet.

Pudh pootkhull(zh)y [*Puðpu·txuɬy*] / ***Pehll(zh)twehl(zh) fodhy*** [*Pɨ̈twɨ̈floðy*] //She is wearing a new cloak without embroidery; her arms are adorned with silver armlets.

Sarmadd parry [*Sarmad̪pary*] / ***Kaagarr mull*** [*Ka gaŋmal*] //He looks great wearing a zari-bordered cloth turban; he is wearing a *todrp* made of muslin cloth and tied in a special style.

Mugwehhdr madd [*Mugwɨ̈rmad̪*] / ***Mupoy pa(r)sh*** [*Muboy pas*] //Her black hair, in ringlets, looks brilliant; her white front teeth look equally attractive.

Moddesh kwehhl [*Mo̤d̪ekwɨ̈l*] / ***Modhiry twoott*** [*Moðɨrytwɨ̈t*] //Her hair that has been curled using the *modhiry* plant sways beautifully as she dances.

Tehrrgon keh(r)n [*Tɨrgonkɨ̈s*] / ***Pehrrgoy patty*** [*Pɨrsoypaty*] //They dance looking askance at their partners; they pass coins to their partners with a back-handed motion.

Poofhi(r)sh mizhky [*Pu fɨ̈ɲmɨ̈ky*] / ***Poofehll(zh) eit*** [*Pu fɨ̈ɬeɨ̈t*] //They dance with wild lime fruits placed on their heads in jest.

Sinekdk mocy [*Sniθmocy*] **/ *Kawse arryll*** [*Ko seaɣyf*] //Silver coins are placed in a cot of gold and taken for the festival

Kawle awit [*Ko·leo f*] **/ *Kane nwekhit*** [*Kopenwi f*] //While dancing they shift both their legs and their eyes so beautifully